DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 602 SP 027 915

TITLE	School Improvement Through Inservice on Accreditation and Self-Evaluation. Revised.
INSTITUTION	Alaska Northwest Association, Anchorage.
PUB DATE	Aug 86
NOTE	59p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Standards; *Accreditation (Institutions); Educational Resources; Elementary Secondary Education; *Program Development; *Public Schools; *Self Evaluation (Groups)
IDENTIFIERS	*Alaska

ABSTRACT

This inservice document provides information for educators responsible for designing a preliminary plan for completion of a self-study which leads to accreditation by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Accreditation of public schools in Alaska is controlled locally and is voluntary. The first section of this manual briefly describes the Alaska accreditation statutes and the rationale for accreditation. Section 2, using a question-answer format, explains what accreditation is, what responsibilities are assigned to whom in the planning process, how self-evaluation is conducted, and why these actions are taken. The third section explains and discusses the purpose and value of a self-study, suggests timelines and procedures, and provides assistance and instruction on the process and procedures that may best be utilized to coordinate the National Study of School Evaluation and Northwest Association and Alaska Committee materials. The responsibilities of all persons and groups involved in conducting the study are specified. Available materials are listed in an appendix. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED279602

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INSERVICE ON ACCREDITATION AND SELF-EVALUATION

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S.R. Johnstone

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

ALASKA COMMITTEE OF THE NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

REVISED: AUGUST 1986

SP 027 915

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INSERVICE
ON
ACCREDITATION AND SELF-EVALUATION

Alaska Northwest Association
2440 East Tudor Road
Suite 123
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

ALASKA COMMITTEE
NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

1986

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
I.	**INTRODUCTION**	
A.	Accreditation Statutes	1
B.	Quality Education	1
C.	Local Control	2
D.	Voluntary Accreditation	2
II.	**NORTHWEST ACCREDITATION**	
A.	What Is Accreditation?	3
B.	What Is Regional Accreditation?	3
C.	What Is The Nature Of Regional Accreditation?	3
D.	What Are The Values Of Accreditation?	3-5
E.	What Is Northwest Accreditation?	5
F.	Why Accreditation Of Our School?	5
G.	What About Accountability?	5
H.	What Does Northwest Accreditation Signify?	6
I.	What Is The Legal Significance Of Accreditation?	6
J.	What Is The Term For Accreditation?	6
K.	What Are The Annual Dues?	6
L.	What Are The Advantages Of Northwest Association Membership?	6
M.	Who Establishes The Standards?	6
N.	Who Revises The Standards?	6
O.	What Is The Commission?	6
P.	What Are The State Committees?	6-7
Q.	How Do Schools Apply For Membership?	7
R.	What Are The Classifications Of Membership?	8
S.	What Is School Evaluation?	8
T.	Why Have A School Evaluation?	9
U.	How Are Self-Evaluations Conducted?	9
V.	Who Will Participate?	9-10
W.	How Does The Study Begin?	10
X.	What Materials Are Available?	10-11
Y.	What Is Program Analysis - The Self-Study?	12
Z.	Who Is The Visiting Team?	12
AA.	What Is The Final Report?	12
BB.	Who Is Responsible For Implementation?	12
CC.	Why Follow-up?	12
DD.	Are There Useful Pre-study Activities?	12-13
III.	**SELF-EVALUATION**	
A.	Purpose	14
B.	Goal	14
C.	Participant Expectation	14
D.	Evaluative Criteria	14

		Page
E.	Program Evaluation Assumptions	15
F.	School Improvement Assumptions	15
G.	Principles Underlying The Use Of The Self-study Process	15
H.	Self-study Is Not:	16
I.	The Self-study Requires:	16
J.	Organization And Use Of The Materials	16
K.	Overview	17-20
	1. Preparation For Conducting The Self-study	17
	2. Conducting The Self-study	18
	3. On-site Visit	19
	4. Follow-up And School Improvements	20
L.	Preparing For Conducting The Self-study	21-41
	1. Planning For The Self-study	21-22
	2. Building Team Attend Self-study Inservice	23-24
	3. Formalize Decision To Conduct Self-study	25-27
	4. Organize Building For The Self-study	28-31
M.	Conducting The Self-study	32-43
	1. School/Community And Philosophy/Objectives Committees	32-33
	2. Initiating General And Subject Area Self-studies	34-36
	3. Preparing For On-site Visit	37-40
	4. Written School's Report	41
N.	On-site Visit	42-48
	1. Visiting Team Meets Faculty And School	42-43
	2. Observation - Participation By Visiting Team	44-46
	3. Visiting Team Report	47-48
O.	Follow-up And School Improvements	49-52
	1. Receive, Distribute, And Respond To Written Team Report And Develop A School Improvement Plan	49-51
	2. Report Findings And School Plan For Improvement	52
Appendix A	Available Materials	53

I. INTRODUCTION

Alaska's association with the school accreditation process began in 1927 at Juneau High School which applied for and received formal accreditation from the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Since that time over 100 schools, K-12, have sought to improve their educational programs be being involved in the accreditation process.

In recent years public concern in Alaska for improved schools resulted in a number of legislative and public actions which culminated in 1981 in the formation of the Governor's Task Force on Effective Schooling. The Task Force worked throughout most of that year and in September published their final report. This was a comprehensive document which urged action on a number of educational concerns. One action taken was the mounting of a pilot training project which both built upon and extended the efforts of the Governor's Task Force.

The Northwest Association has a similar ongoing concern for educational improvement. This inservice document is an integration of the Alaska-developed materials and the accreditation requirements of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

This document should prove to be beneficial to those responsible for designing a preliminary plan for completion of a self-study which leads to accreditation by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

A. ACCREDITATION STATUTES

Section 14.03.010 of the Alaska Statutes states: There is established in the state a system of public schools to be administered and maintained as provided in this title.

Chapter 07, Article I, Section 14.07.020 (06) states: The Department of Education shall accredit those public school which meet accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; these shall be adopted by the department and presented to the Legislature.

The above mentioned statutes point out the responsibility the Legislature, the State Board of Education, and the Department of Education have toward the accreditation of Alaskan schools.

B. QUALITY EDUCATION

Alaska has long been noted for its excellent support of public schools. From territorial days until the present its citizens have been willing to contribute their resources to promote education of the young to an extent seldom matched by residents of other states.

C. LOCAL CONTROL

Accreditation by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges recognizes, to the greatest degree possible, local control of schools while providing to the citizens of the state assurances that their money is buying a quality product.

D. VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION

Schools that voluntarily apply for accreditation through the Northwest Accrediting Association and complete the combined Northwest-Alaska Committee developed materials will have involved themselves in a professionally rewarding activity - an activity that, when completed, will have caused the school staff and community to assess their school in terms of both research-based effective schooling practices and time-tested traditional materials.

II. NORTHWEST ACCREDITATION

A. WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation is recognition of a high-quality and well-balanced educational program. Accreditation serves as the catalyst for improvement. It generally upgrades the quality of instruction and the school's program of study. Accredited schools meet standards considered essential for quality education.

B. WHAT IS "REGIONAL" ACCREDITATION?

Six regional associations accredit schools in all 50 states. Additionally, the several associations provide accreditation services by contract to schools all over the world. These organizations have provided for the development and application of standards that go beyond state boundaries, while at the same time avoiding a national organization characteristic of ministry programs in other countries. Programs of regional accreditation have attempted to keep control of education as close as possible to the community, providing a responsiveness through which improvement and recognition of quality have been possible.

C. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF REGIONAL ACCREDITATION?

Regional accreditation is voluntary and extra-legal. Schools are not required to join.

Regional accreditation is institutional. The entire school shall meet the accreditation standards.

Regional accreditation provides a means for its members to have a voice in determining attainable standards.

Regional accreditation provides the opportunity for professionals to have a voice in their Association. Members are provided the opportunity to participate in procedures which lead to mutual improvement.

D. WHAT ARE THE VALUES OF ACCREDITATION?

1. To the Public:

   Accreditation provides justification for public confidence in its schools---it does not promise perfection---only that it has the resources, the leadership needed for on-going improvements.

   Accreditation provides standards which are measuring sticks for communities to appraise their schools.

Accreditation permits the school to become a part of a regional league of good schools, establishing a credibility that goes beyond local confines.

Accreditation gives testimony to its public that the school is meeting expectations and fulfilling standards that transcend local and state requirements.

2. To the School:

Accreditation provides evidence of accountability---that the school uses judiciously the resources at its command.

Accreditation expects and receives from the community the resources which the school needs to accomplish its philosophic goals.

Accreditation leads to the improvement of the school by its own efforts. To meet and to exceed the standards requires total school involvement and a stout commitment to educational renewal.

Accreditation demands that members undertake a periodic evaluation which is a stimulus for growth, improvement, and directed change.

3. To the Staff:

In accredited schools, everyone may be assured that:

a. The educational program is developed from the school's philosophy and from staff knowledge of the needs of the students being served.

b. The school provides favorable physical conditions for effective instruction.

c. The teachers are qualified in professional and subject matter areas.

d. The administrators are qualified for their positions by training and experience.

e. The staff has available to it support programs in the areas of guidance, health, and special education.

f. The school encourages effective approaches in curriculum, organization, and the use of technology.

g. An instructional media program, appropriately staffed, equipped, and supplied, is available to complement the learning program.

h. Teaching schedules include time for conferences and instructional planning.

i. Teachers play a significant role in curriculum review and change.

j. The resources and working conditions in the school are comparable to those in NWA schools throughout the region.

k. Teachers are involved periodically in a comprehensive evaluation of the school's program and in designing a plan for school improvement.

l. Teachers are assured that a basic instructional program is going to be offered by qualified instructors.

E. WHAT IS NORTHWEST ACCREDITATION?

Northwest Association was founded in 1917 and has grown to include over 1,000 member schools and nearly 150 colleges and universities in the northwest area states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. The members subscribe to a system of voluntary self-regulation through the use of realistic, objective standards against which a school can measure its own performance.

F. WHY ACCREDITATION OF OUR SCHOOL?

It is legitimate for teachers, administrators, school boards, and parents to ask: Why should our school volunteer to become accredited? Why should we undertake the demanding task of Northwest Association school evaluation? Do educators and the school users profit from a validation visit by our peers? Would the time, money, and energy expended in a school evaluation be spent more appropriately in individual staff planning?

G. WHAT ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY?

Adherence to the Northwest Association accreditation/evaluation program provides evidence that a school is accountable to its public, since membership requires the school to regularly conduct schedules and comprehensive self-studies and to subject itself to an intensive review by a team of educators from outside the district. The process results in dual accountability: the community is held accountable for providing teachers with adequate resources and the staff is held accountable for using those resources creatively, cooperatively, and effectively. The Northwest Association accredited school has notified its community that it is willing to undergo an objective examination by professional colleagues.

H. WHAT DOES NORTHWEST ACCREDITATION SIGNIFY?

It attests that the school has the resources for excellence and uses them judiciously. The conditions for quality and progress exist in the school.

I. WHAT IS THE LEGAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ACCREDITATION?

Membership and accreditation is optional, voluntary, and non-official. An important point is that cooperative action can improve educational services better than dictums from governmental agencies.

J. WHAT IS THE TERM FOR ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation is for one year and must be renewed annually.

K. WHAT ARE ANNUAL DUES?

All member schools pay minimal yearly dues. There are no special fees.

L. WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP?

Membership enables school representatives to participate in the establishment of criteria and standards for education.

M. WHO ESTABLISHES THE STANDARDS?

The standards are essentially judgments about those factors that are known to foster quality schools. They are formulated by school people who are members of the Association.

N. WHO REVISES THE STANDARDS?

Standards can be revised at each Annual Meeting on recommendation of the Standards Committee and approval by the Commission on Schools and the Delegate Assembly.

O. WHAT IS THE COMMISSION?

The Commission on Schools consists of three elected members from each state. Each threesome is known as the State Committee from that state. The seven states of the Association provide a total of twenty-one members, and this comprises the Commission. The specific responsibility of the Commission is to recommend to the Association the necessary standards which shall apply to member schools.

P. WHAT ARE STATE COMMITTEES?

The State Committees consist of three elected members from each state, and they are the prime bodies concerned with decision-making relative to the accreditation of schools within each state.

State Committees interpret the policies and program of the Commission on Schools and the Association. They formulate the guiding policies for evaluating member report and the conducting of visits to member schools.

Release of Information: State Committees shall not release to the press or other communication agencies any comparative data involving member schools. Information relating to a school's standards must be obtained from the member school.

Q. HOW DO SCHOOLS APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP?

Schools seeking membership in the Association shall:

1. Submit to the State Committee: (a) an official application form; (b) a copy of the resolution by the governing body (Board of Trustees, Board or Education, or Board of Directors) approving the application and accepting the regulations, standards, and principles of the Association. Application forms and copies of the resolution may be obtained from the State Committee or the Executive Director of the Commission on Schools.

   Submit to the State Committee before October 15 a completed Annual Report to the Northwest Association.

   Submit to the State Committee a certification that: (a) the school has completed, within the preceding three years, a self-evaluation using the EVALUATIVE CRITERIA of the National Study School Evaluation and other means of self-evaluation approved by the State Committee; (b) a visiting committee has reviewed the appraisal made in the self-evaluation; (c) a follow-up report accompany the next annual report.

2. The popular approach to initial membership is to seek provisional membership prior to completion of the self-evaluation. Provisional membership may be granted to applicant schools which would otherwise be approved for membership, with the understanding that the self-evaluation be completed within three years of the date of application.

3. Candidates must be approved by the Alaska State Committee, the Association's New Schools Committee, the Commission on Schools and the Delegate Assembly of the Association. The school's accredited status extends for one year and its accreditation is renewed by submitting an annual report which indicates that it continues to satisfy the criteria established for membership.

R. WHAT ARE THE CLASSIFICATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP?

Based on the evaluations made by the State and Reviewing Committees, schools are approved, advised, warned, or dropped from the list of accredited schools. The State and reviewing committees consider the significance of deviations in assigning ratings. A school is classified as "Approved" when it equals or exceeds the standards of the Association. A school may be "Approved with Comment" when it has only minor deviations from a particular standard or standards.

Schools will be placed on the "Advised" list when no observable effort has been made, by the second year, to correct deviations from a standard upon which comment was previously made. A school is classified as "Advised" when it deviates from one or more standards. An "Approved with Comment" classification need not precede an "Advised" classification.

A school is classified as "Warned" when it substantially deviates from one or more standards. Warning is usually given after a school has been advised and the deviation persists. A school may be dropped from "Approved" to "Warned" when the deviations are such that they should not be allowed to persist beyond the current year. A school shall be dropped from membership after two consecutive "Warned" assignments.

The Commission on Schools has established a well-defined and orderly procedure that permits a reexamination of the membership requirements each year. Those membership requirements were developed by member school representatives from the states served by the Association: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Montana, and Idaho; and the requirements are revised by the membership as changes are deemed necessary. Northwest Association standards define the resources--human, physical, and procedural-- that every school requires if it is to develop a quality program. Standards are even more critical in this era when resources for education must face heavy competition for the tax dollar.

S. WHAT IS SCHOOL EVALUATION?

Evaluation is that endeavor by a local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices, as well as the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. Evaluation seeks to nurture and continue good practices and to remedy those that are ineffectual. Schools do not "pass" or "fail" in the evaluation process. All schools can be made better.

T. WHY HAVE A SCHOOL EVALUATION?

Evaluation seeks to encourage and reinforce good practices and to change those that are ineffective. It offers one form of accountability, and is valuable to schools of all sizes.

Careful, cooperative, comprehensive evaluation provides a useful tool for educational improvement, so that the basic purpose of the entire process is to strengthen school programs.

U. HOW ARE SELF EVALUATIONS CONDUCTED?

School evaluation is a three-phased program: (1) the self-study, during which the school evaluates its effectiveness; (2) on-site validation by an external team of educators, to add objectivity to the process; (3) implementation or change process which uses the results of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The local faculty is responsible for conducting the self-study to determine the degree to which its performance matches the objectives it has established for itself. Evaluations should generate plans for improvement and changes that make for a better school.

V. WHO WILL PARTICIPATE?

The school staff and administration, under the guidance of a Steering Committee, will be responsible for conducting the self-evaluation. Students, parents and community representatives may also be involved.

Teachers will serve on one or more committees to:

- Gather information on the school, the students, and the program; study new curricula; and evaluate existing practices.
- Provide the information requested on forms used to guide the self-evaluation.
- Determine the most notable strengths of the school's program and the aspects most in need of improvement.
- Help frame specific recommendations and proposals for the improvements of the school.
- Discuss the school and their own department with members of the Visiting Team.
- Help implement changes which have been recommended as an outgrowth of the self-study and team visit.

The Visiting Team which reviews the self-evaluation report will be composed of teachers and administrators drawn largely from schools outside the local district, university professors, state department of education representatives, and, occasionally, students and parents.

W. HOW DOES THE STUDY BEGIN?

The study begins with the appointment of a Steering Committee, usually of four to seven members including the school principal. This committee has the responsibility for organizing the membership of the various subject and general area committees. It will establish a time schedule for the self-evaluation activities, and will provide the necessary evaluation materials.

The Northwest Association Alaska State Chairperson or designee will assist in the coordination of the study, including the formulation of the visiting team.

X. WHAT MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE?

The appropriate materials for the level of education offered by the school must be used, i.e., Elementary, Junior High/Middle, High School, K-12, or Special Purpose.

1. The evaluative criteria materials are published by the National Study of School Evaluation,[1] a non-profit school cooperative, and may be ordered from them.

   Evaluative Criteria available are:

   Evaluative Criteria: Sixth Edition
   (for High Schools)
   Secondary School Evaluative Criteria: Narrative Edition
   (Special Purpose Schools)
   Middle School/Junior High Evaluative Criteria

   Elementary School Evaluative Criteria
   K-12 School Evaluative Criteria
   Central Office Evaluative Criteria
   Teacher Opinion Inventory
   Parent Opinion Inventory
   Student Opinion Inventory
   Evaluation Guidelines for Multicultural/Multiracial Education

   Order the appropriate materials from:

   [1]The National Study of School Evaluation
   5201 Leesburg Pike
   Falls Church, Virginia 22041.
   Phone: (703)-820-2727

2. The Commission on Schools of the Northwest Association[1] has developed standards and annual report forms for all of the Evaluative Criteria except Central Office Evaluative Criteria. The following standards publications and annual report forms are available from the Commission.

   a. Policies and Standards for Accreditation of:

      (1) High Schools
      (2) Junior High/Middle Schools
      (3) Elementary Schools
      (4) K-12 Schools
      (5) Special Purpose Schools

   b. Annual Report Forms

      (1) High Schools
      (2) Junior High/Middle Schools
      (3) Elementary Schools
      (4) K-12 Schools
      (5) Special Purpose Schools

3. The Alaska State Committee[2] has developed several publications to assist the school in achieving and maintaining accredited status. The following publications are available from the secretary:

   a. Accreditation Guidelines For Alaska's Schools

   b. Alaska Guidelines for Validation Visitation Chairman and Committee Members

[1]Commission on Schools, The Northwest
Association of Schools and Colleges
Western Oregon State College
Monmouth, Oregon 97361
Phone: (503) 838-1220.
Attention Dave Curry

[2]Alaska Northwest Association Committee
Stowell R. Johnstone, Secretary
4822 Loretta Lane
Anchorage, Alaska 99507
Phone: 562-4818.

Y. WHAT IS THE PROGRAM ANALYSIS - THE SELF-STUDY?

Program analysis comprises much of the self-study. First, the nature and expectations of the school and community are determined. Following that, a statement of the school's philosophy and objectives is formulated. Within this framework, staff and administration determine the degree to which the school achieves its goals. Reports from the subcommittees cite the most important strengths and weaknesses in the program, and make specific recommendations for improvement. Each subcommittee report is discussed and accepted by the entire staff, thus making the evaluation a schoolwide effort. At the close of the self-study, the staff addresses itself to an appraisal of the school as a whole.

Z. WHO IS THE VISITING TEAM?

The Visiting Team is constituted as described earlier. Visiting Team members review the self-study, visit classes, examine materials, talk with teachers and students, and, finally, discuss the findings with the staff in departmental meetings. The Visiting Team validates the school's evaluation in terms of the school's own statement of philosophy and objectives. The team will, finally, present its commendations and recommendations in the form of a written report.

AA. WHAT IS THE FINAL REPORT?

The final report is presented to the principal of the school by the chairperson of the validation team.

BB. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION?

Implementation of the findings of the evaluation begins after the staff and administration have had an opportunity to analyze the final report. Some recommendations can be accomplished almost immediately; others may require additional planning and resources. There may be some recommendations that the local staff will consider inapplicable.

CC. WHY FOLLOW-UP?

The Northwest Association expects some form of follow-up activity after the school has completed the evaluation process. This must be by way of a written report in response to the recommendations submitted with the school's next annual report.

DD. ARE THERE USEFUL PRE-STUDY ACTIVITIES?

The following activities will be helpful in preparing the school to accomplish the evaluation.

1. Follow-up studies of former students.
2. Surveys of school and community resources.
3. Studies of occupational and educational intentions of students.
4. Studies of student achievement, attitudes, and morale.
5. Evaluations of innovative programs and curricula.
6. Assessments of the adequacy of facilities and materials.
7. Surveys of parent opinions on educational and social issues.

III. SELF-EVALUATION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this inservice section is to assist a building team in its design of a preliminary plan for self-evaluation by:

1. Explaining and discussing the purpose and value of a self-study.

2. Suggesting a timeline and procedures required to complete and follow up the self-study process.

3. Provide assistance and instruction on the process and procedures that may best be utilized to coordinate the National Study of School Evaluation, Northwest Association and Alaska Committee materials.

4. Have available resource persons familiar with the process, procedures and materials.

B. GOAL

The goal is to assist member schools and potential member schools in understanding the process of conducting:

(1) A self-study evaluation;

(2) Validation Team visitation; and

(3) A follow-up plan in order to fulfill the Association's school improvement requirement.

C. PARTICIPANT EXPECTATION

Each team will draft a preliminary plan for its school's self-study, team visit, and follow-up activities.

D. EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

The standard evaluation instrument is the appropriate Evaluative Criteria, published by the National Study of School Evaluation, as applied to the applicable Northwest Association Standards. The process provides a way for faculty self-study committees to make an intensive review of all aspects of the total school program. The method involves an honest, objective self-appraisal by the administration and staff. In addition, a visiting team of educators is invited to review the comprehensiveness of the "School Self-Evaluation Report." By identifying areas of strength and areas of concern, the self-study points the way for educational improvements.

E. PROGRAM EVALUATION ASSUMPTIONS

1. School programs and support services for students must be formally evaluated on a periodic basis.

2. Evaluation results must identify both strengths and weaknesses as based on community characteristics, student needs, and the school's philosophy.

3. Schools with differing characteristics, programs, and facilities can be equally effective.

F. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ASSUMPTIONS

1. School improvement requires a local commitment and is a professional obligation and responsibility.

2. School improvement must be based on local characteristics, desires, and financial ability.

3. School improvement must be generated as the result of critical analysis and based on increased understanding of student characteristics and needs as supported by research.

G. PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE USE OF THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

The following principles are the guiding premises and should be stressed and reinforced continuously during the school's self-study.

1. Self-study must be viewed as a process of self-determination which includes interaction of the professional staff, classified staff, representatives of the community and the student body, and members of a visiting team (total involvement).

2. Self-study is an internal process--as opposed to an external evaluation--that focuses on the appropriateness of curricular, instructional, procedural, and administrative practices.

3. The self-appraisal of school programs and support services is predicated on an understanding of community expectation for the school, education needs of the youth served by the school, and an accepted educational philosophy which articulates those expectations and needs (based on local philosophy).

4. The products of the self-study process are a written evaluation report and a plan for implementing improvements to the educational programs and support services offered by the school (leads to follow-up action plan and report).

H. SELF-STUDY IS NOT:

1. An evaluation of school programs by an external agency.
2. Approval by the state for the purpose of school funding.
3. Evaluation of individual teachers and/or individual teaching practices.

I. THE SELF-STUDY REQUIRES: (Dependent upon the size of the school)

1. A Building Coordinator.
2. A faculty Steering Committee.
3. Subcommittees of faculty, staff, community members, and students.
4. An Out-of-District Chairperson.
5. A Visiting Committee.
6. Self-study materials.
7. Follow-up and implementation plan.

J. ORGANIZATION AND USE OF THE MATERIALS

The following materials are designed to provide an outline of the self-study process and general information useful to the planners of the building self-study.

This introduction has presented general information regarding the purposes, organization, and benefits of self-study. Following an Overview, four major sections which have been developed according to the essential activities of self-study are:

1. Preparation for conducting the self-study (p. 19)
2. Conducting the self-study (p. 20)
3. On-site visit (p. 21)
4. Follow-up and school improvements (p. 22)

K. OVERVIEW: WORKSHEETS

Preparation for conducting the self-study[1] (L. p. 23)

EMPHASIS: Planning for self-study by familiarizing and organizing faculty, community, and students.

RESPONSIBILITIES

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
1.	Planning for self-study	Principal	
2.	Building team attend "Planning for Self-study Workshop" sponsored by Northwest Accrediting Association (Alaska State Committee)	Principal, Building Coordinator, Other Staff (if possible)	
3.	Formalize decision to conduct self-study	Principal, Staff, Superintendent, Board, Out-of-District Chairperson	
4.	Organize Building for self-study	Building Coordinator, Steering Committee, Staff, Community Representatives, Students	

[1]The building team is responsible for identifying a self-study timeline appropriate for its school.

Conducting the Self-study (M. p. 34)

EMPHASIS: Provide for faculty, community, and student in-depth analysis of school programs.

RESPONSIBILITIES

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
1.	School/Community and Philosophy/Objectives Committees	Steering Committee, Evaluation Subcommittees	
2.	Initiate General and Subject Area self-studies	Steering Committee, Evaluation Subcommittees	
3.	Preparing for on-site visit	Building Coordinator, Steering Committee, Principal, Out-of-District Chairperson	
4.	Written "School Report"	Steering Committee, Building Coordinator, Principal	

*On-site Visit (N. p. 44)

EMPHASIS: Visiting team interacts with faculty, students and community, verifies self-evaluation, and reports findings.

RESPONSIBILITIES

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
1.	Visiting Team meets faculty and school	Building Coordinator Outside Chairperson, Steering Committee, Faculty, Student and Community Representatives, Visiting Team	
2.	Observation-participation by Visiting Team	Visiting Team, Building Staff, Community, Board and Student representatives	
3.	Visiting Team report	Visiting team, Building Staff, Community, Board, and Student Representatives	

*Alaska Guidelines for Validation Visitation Chairmen and Committee Members will be used.

Follow-up and School Improvements (O. p. 51)

EMPHASIS: Establish a timeline for implementing desirable school improvement recommendations contained in the school report and in the visiting team report.

RESPONSIBILITIES

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
1.	Receive, distribute, and respond to evaluation reports and develop school improvement plan	Principal, Faculty, Steering Committee	
2.	Report findings and school plan for improvement	Principal, Steering Committee, and Superintendent	
3.	Submit a copy of the school's follow-up report with the next annual report to the State Committee.		

L. PREPARATION FOR CONDUCTING THE SELF-STUDY

1. WHAT: Planning for Self-Study
   WHO: Principal
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

The most crucial and significant role in the self-study process is that of building leadership. It is the building principal who initiates, develops readiness for, maintains enthusiasm during, and provides follow-up strategies to the self-study process. The principal should do very little of the actual evaluation, but sets the tone of the building and coordinates the process so that those staff members directly concerned are immersed in serious study of their school program responsibilities.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Contact the Alaska State Committee to receive materials, become familiar with the processes and the roles and responsibilities of the principal, the staff, district, and community.

a. Contact State Chairperson or designee for planning assistance.

b. Review the purpose of the self-study, the role and responsibilities of various individuals and groups, estimated costs in time and money, and the suggested time schedule.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

Discuss informally with the superintendent, for the purpose of receiving tentative approval and support funds to conduct a self-study. Discuss accreditation informally with the staff.

a. Discuss with the superintendent the purpose of self-study, the fact that it it a requirement of the Northwest Association accrediting process, the benefits accruing from the process, the superintendent's responsibilities and those of the Board of Education, and the timetable for the study.

b. Indicate to the superintendent an estimate of both time and materials costs. (Staff meet a minimum of once every two weeks; more often as self-study proceeds. Include cost of materials, extra help, duplicating, inservice, and Visiting Team.)

c. Emphasize that the building must have support of the superintendent, support of the Board of Education, and that of the community (particularly assistance dealing with PR). Indicate that the superintendent will be requested to participate during the team visit.

d. Introduce the self-study process informally to the faculty, emphasizing the purpose and values of self-study, the needed staff commitment and effort, and estimated time and dollars cost.

RESPONSIBILITY 3:

Notify in writing the Alaska State Committee of intent to conduct self-study.

a. A school intending to go through a self-study and a Northwest Association visit shall notify the State Committee in writing.

b. The dates of the self-study and visitation shall be determined mutually by the Alaska State Committee and the school principal.

RESPONSIBILITY 4:

Provide inservice opportunity for key staff members.

a. All persons selected to attend the inservice should be faculty leaders.

b. Criteria for selection faculty leaders might include:

(1) Capable of and willing to assume the role and responsibilities of the Building Coordinator.

(2) Respected by peers.

(3) Has demonstrated willingness to assume additional responsibilities.

(4) Outstanding teacher.

(5) Good working relationships with peers.

(6) Capable of organizing the faculty for self-study.

(7) Able to maintain enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

(8) Able to focus adopted procedures on the end product.

2. WHAT: Building Team Attend Self-Study Inservice
WHO: Principal, Building Coordinator, and Staff Members
WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

The building team will design a preliminary plan for self-study at the inservice. Resource persons will be available to provide assistance. Evaluative materials will be available for inspection.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Out-Of-District Chairperson assignment:

a. The Out-of-District Chairperson is an educator selected mutually by the State Committee and the building principal. This person should have recently conducted a successful self-study and be willing to assist your team in designing and implementing the school's self-study.

b. The Out-of-District Chairperson will:

(1) Assist the inservice team to design a tentative plan for the self-study.

(2) Offer to come to the school to assist in staff orientation (a school expense).

(3) Work with the Steering Committee to establish time schedules.

(4) Keep in touch throughout the progress of the self-study.

(5) Work with the Steering Committee in establishing a time and schedule for the team visit.

(6) Organize, delegate and supervise all activities of the Visiting Team during its validation study.

(7) Edit the final report of the Visiting Team.

(8) Upon request, discuss with the staff the final report and recommendations made by Visiting Team.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

Design preliminary plan and timeline for self-study process and receive approval to conduct self-study from the chairman of the Alaska State Committee.

a. With the help of the Out-of-District Chairperson, the building team will articulate a preliminary plan for self-study for their building.

b. The preliminary plan will begin with Section L and be developed through Section O.

L-3 Formalize Decision
L-4 Organize Building
M Conducting the Self-Study
N On-Site Visit
O Follow-up and School Improvement

c. The preliminary plan should be developed around a timeline. Other aspects the building team must consider are:

(1) Responsibilities of persons and committees.

(2) Time and dollar resources required.

(3) Numbers, procedures, and criteria for selection of all committee members.

(4) An outline for staff presentation including answers to faculty questions.

(5) Plan for inclusion of student and community representatives, including times for committee meetings.

(6) Provision for continuous checks of self-study progress by subcommittees.

(7) A follow-up plan for school improvement.

RESPONSIBILITY 3:

Review NSSE, Northwest Association and Alaska Committee materials and select those appropriate for your school.

a. In concert, determine if the self-study package selected fits your school. Does it appear to be appropriate to the characteristics of your program and building?

b. Are there areas within the self-study materials that are inappropriate for your school? Your community?

c. Overall, do the materials provide a practical framework for the school self-study?

3. WHAT: Formalize Decision to Conduct Self-Study
   WHO: Principal, Staff, Superintendent, Board, Out-of-District Chairperson
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

After information discussions regarding the self-study process have taken place and the school team has designed a preliminary plan for self-study, the decision to undertake the self-study should be formalized. In some districts this is a decision made by the principal, the superintendent, or both. In other districts, it might be desirable to have a formal board resolution. In all cases, however, it is important that the principal notify the staff, students, superintendent, board, and community of this decision by providing full and complete information regarding the process, requirements, expectations, and costs.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Make decision to undertake self study: Notify superintendent and board. Obtain formal board resolution if desirable.

a. The principal and the team attending the self-study inservice should review with the superintendent, or representative, the preliminary plan for self-study.

b. Such review should include:

   (1) The purposes of self-study.

   (2) The fact that self-study is a requirement for accreditation.

   (3) The estimated time and dollar costs.

c. If desirable, a board resolution should be obtained endorsing and supporting the building self-study.

d. The formal decision to undertake self-study should be communicated to the board, staff, students, and community.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

Order materials:

a. Order sufficient quantities of Evaluative Criteria.

b. Order sufficient quantities of Alaska materials.

RESPONSIBILITY 3:

Make staff presentation.

a. An out-of-district person may assist the principal with the staff presentation. A film-strip is available as an introduction to the self-study process.

b. The staff presentation should emphasize:

   (1) In self-study, the school measures itself against internal criteria (levels of expectation and aspiration) rather than against external standards (fixed requirements).

   (2) Self-study, is designed to provide a process whereby the school staff makes an intensive study of the general and subject areas of the school.

   (3) Self-study must be viewed as a professional responsibility and as an opportunity to exercise responsible professional judgment.

   (4) Self-study is an indication to the public that the school program is being given a careful, formalized, and complete appraisal.

c. Staff presentation should focus on teachers' responsibilities. The teacher serves on one or more general and subject-area study committees which:

   (1) Gather information on school, students, programs.

   (2) Study new curricula and evaluate existing practices.

   (3) Determine the most notable strengths of the school's program and the aspects most in need of improvement.

   (4) Help frame specific recommendations and proposals for the improvement of the school.

   (5) Discuss the school and their own learning areas with members of the Northwest Association sponsored visitation team.

d. The staff presentation should indicate:

   (1) What has already occurred in preparation and planning for self-study. (Section L)

   (2) What remains to be done to prepare for self-study. (Section L)

(3) The work involved in the actual self-study. (Section M)

(4) The process of on-site visitation. (Section N)

(5) The proposed follow-up. (Section O)

e. Common questions asked by faculties are:

(1) Do we have to go through this self-study? Is this selfstudy at the request of the administration? Does this self-study get us accredited?

(2) Of what value will this self-study be to us? To the school? To the students? To the community?

(3) How were the evaluation materials selected? How much does the self-study cost? How much time is required? Can we modify the evaluation materials?

(4) Why doesn't the state evaluate us?

(5) Will there be a follow-up study?

RESPONSIBILITY 4:

Begin information program for community.

a. The fact that the school is undergoing a self-study, including an on-site visit, is of interest to the community. Both the organized communications channels and the local "telegraph" have been used successfully.

b. The news release should indicate:

(1) The fact that the self-study process is starting and the length of time involved.

(2) That selected community representatives will be involved.

(3) The general purposes of self-study: school improvement and accreditation.

(4) That an external team will be visiting.

(5) That further news releases will be made as the study progresses.

4. WHAT: Organize Building for the Self-Study
   WHO: Building Coordinator, Steering Committee, Staff, Community Representatives, Students
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

Upon final decision to undertake the self-study, the principal should formally appoint the Building Coordinator and together they should select the Steering Committee. From that time on, the Building Coordinator and the Steering Committee are responsible for the self-study. The principal should sit with the committee, either ad hoc or as a regular member, depending on the preliminary plan.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Select Building Coordinator.

a. The Building Coordinator acts as chairperson of the Steering Committee.

b. The Coordinator should be one of the faculty members who attended the workshop.

c. The Coordinator has full responsibility for the self-study.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

Select Steering Committee.

a. The Steering Committee has the major responsibility to organize, conduct, and follow up the self-study.

b. The committee is composed of the Building Coordinator and five to seven staff members representing faculty leadership.

c. In some cases the principal sits as a member of the committee; in others he sits ad hoc with the committee. This decision should be made at the time the preliminary plan is designed.

d. In some cases the Steering Committee is representative of all major areas of the building program; in others faculty leaders are selected without regard to professional responsibility. Again, this decision should be made at the time the preliminary plan is designed.

e. It is the Steering Committee's responsibility to reaffirm with the staff the value and purpose of the self-study. It is not the committee's responsibility to do the self-study.

f. Responsibilities of the Steering Committee:

(1) Involving every building certificated and classified staff member and key community representatives.

(2) Establishing a self-study time schedule.

(3) Appointing subcommittee members.

(4) Developing and implementing a method and schedule for subcommittee reports.

(5) Coordinating the work of all subcommittees and periodically reporting to the faculty and parents.

(6) Checking progress of committees; identifying and solving problems.

(7) Anticipating need for and providing materials and supplies to subcommittees.

(8) Acting as a stimulus to sustain interest through the completion of the self-study.

(9) Acting as liaison to one or more subcommittees for the purpose of:

(a) Assisting subcommittees in understanding their responsibilities.

(b) Checking on incomplete and questionable reports which are to be returned to subcommittees.

(c) Distributing to the self-study committees copies of their final summary.

(10) Preparing summary of self-study.

(11) Soliciting from subcommittee members recommendations for candidates for the Visiting Team.

(12) Planning in cooperation with the principal and the Building Coordinator, the composition and selection of the Visiting Team.

RESPONSIBILITY 3:

Appoint School Community and Philosophy/Objectives committees.

a. These two committees should be formed as early as possible because both require extra time for data collection, study, report writing, and reaction.

b. They should have broad-based faculty, student, and community representative.

c. School/Community Committee should include some members who are competent in data collection and analysis, since it gathers and analyzes information concerning student and community population characteristics.

d. The School/Community Committee's work must be completed first as it identifies the nature and educational expectations of the community.

e. Based upon community needs and educational expectations, the educational growth needs of students are determined.

f. At this time, based on the educational and growth needs of students, the Philosophy/Objectives Committee provides an explicit statement of the school's purpose and objectives.

g. The work of the Philosophy/Objectives Committee provides the foundation for the activities of the self-study and Visiting Team.

RESPONSIBILITY 4:

Select general and learning area subcommittees.

a. At the time the School/Community and Philosophy/Objectives Committees are preparing their reports, the Steering Committee should name the general and learning area subcommittees.

b. Each faculty member should serve on at least one general and one learning area subcommittee. In smaller schools, each member should serve on a minimum of three subcommittees.

c. Staff preferences for assignment to general and learning area subcommittees should be considered by the Steering Committee.

d. All subcommittees should be large enough to assure an accurate and valid report to the entire faculty, as well as to the Visiting Team.

e. Each subcommittee should have an appointed chairperson who:

   (1) Calls meetings.

   (2) Provides leadership and information.

   (3) Gives verbal reports to the faculty.

   (4) Sees that the final report is written.

f. Each subcommittee should have a recorder who summarizes each meeting (useful to preparation of final document) and gives a copy of the summary to the Steering Committee.

g. Some schools have parents and student representatives on all study committees. Other schools select certain committees on which they are represented. Minimally, it is recommended students and community representatives should be on the School/Community, Philosophy/Objectives, Student Activities, and Pupil Services committees. Parents and students must know the situation well enough to judge how best interests of school and community can be served. This decision must be made in the preliminary plan.

RESPONSIBILITY 5:

All subcommittee reports will be edited by this committee for presentation to the faculty prior to inclusion in the evaluation document.

M. CONDUCTING THE SELF-STUDY

1. WHAT: School/Community and Philosophy/Objectives Committees
   WHO: Study Committees, Steering Committee
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

The philosophy and objectives of the school are the principles under which all educational programs and support services offered students are examined. Because of the importance of this statement and the supporting objectives, it is essential that the philosophy and objectives be based on the educational needs and expectations of youth and community and that it be acceptable to the building staff. Thus, the School/Community Committee effort precedes the work of the Philosophy/Objectives Committee. On the statement of the latter rests, of course, the remaining efforts of the self-study subcommittees.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

School/Community and Philosophy/Objectives Committees initiate self-study.

a. Work of both committees may be initiated concurrently.

b. The goal of the School/Community Committee is to provide information which will assist others to answer the questions:

   (1) What basic information is available about the community and its youth to learn if the school is meeting educational expectations and needs?

   (2) How well are the practices in the school meeting the educational expectations of the community and the educational needs of youth?

c. The School/Community Committee report should be completed first. Subsections of the report should be submitted to the Philosophy/Objectives Committee and the Steering Committee as completed.

   d. The final report of the School/Community Committee should be submitted to the Philosophy/Objectives Committee and the Steering Committee and copies made available for staff inspection.

   e. School/Community report will provide background information for the Visiting Team.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

Philosophy/Objectives Committee develops report.

a. The Philosophy/Objectives Committee is to articulate a building philosophy and supporting objectives:

   (1) In accordance with the school district's educational philosophy, and

   (2) Based on the community and youth educational expectations and needs as identified by the School/Community Committee.

b. The statement and supporting objectives must be related to:

   (1) The school's responsibility for educating its youth.

   (2) The nature of the educative process within the school.

   (3) Characteristics and needs of students whom the school serves.

RESPONSIBILITY 3:

Obtaining staff agreement on philosophy and objectives of the school.

a. The Philosophy/Objectives Committee must be organized so that all faculty can be involved or have input, when desired, to the committee's deliberations.

b. As deliberations proceed, several faculty meetings should be held to discuss the progress and decisions of the committee.

c. A faculty meeting must be held to accept the final report. Faculty concensus must be obtained, as the Philosophy/Objectives report must be accepted as the framework through which all educational programs and support services offered students will be examined.

d. The committee report will serve as guiding principles for the Visiting Team.

2. WHAT: Initiating General and Subject Area Self-Studies
WHO: Study Committees, Steering Committee
WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

Within the established Philosophy/Objectives framework, subcommittees of faculty, students, and community representatives study the general and specific education program areas in terms of those critical questions paramount to the effectiveness of the school. This self-study begins with agreements on what principles and practices are desirable in each area under consideration, determines the degree that these desirable principles and practices are implemented, and concludes with a final report that identifies strengths, and suggestions for school improvement.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Within the Philosophy/Objectives framework, conduct general and learning areas self-studies.

a. General emphases for each subcommittee includes:

(1) Self-study in terms of what the school is doing.

(2) Opportunity for interaction and introspection by encouraging deliberation, discussion, research, and creative approaches to school improvement.

(3) The need to create an increased awareness of existing conditions and practices through the careful, systematic analysis of each area under study.

(4) Maintaining focus on the final product: recommendations for school improvement.

b. Subcommittees have the responsibility to complete the self-study in the assigned area by:

(1) Examining guiding principles and making modifications when desirable.

(2) Collecting data, exhibits, and explanations about the existing program or service, which includes checklists and evaluations of the Evaluative Criteria.

(3) Reviewing available literature concerning good practices, standards, and criteria in specific area.

(4) Mutually identifying the elements of strength and those factors needing improvement of the specific area under study.

(5) Making suggestions or recommendations for remediation of concerns.

(6) Reporting to the staff.

(7) Writing final report for the Steering Committee.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

Evaluative Criteria suggestions for general subcommittees (Curriculum, Student Activities, Media, Pupil Services, Facilities, Staff, and Administration) include:

a. Consider the value of including community and student representatives as members of some committees.

b. The opportunity during self-study to provide commendations and recommendations for each specific area.

RESPONSIBILITY 3:

Subcommittees report orally to staff and provide written report to the Steering Committee.

a. The subcommittee chairperson is responsible for both the oral and written reports.

b. Each subcommittee report must be accepted by the staff.

c. Scheduling of oral reports is the responsibility of the Steering Committee.

d. The Steering Committee must ensure that conflicts between subcommittees are resolved prior to the final school report.

e. Opportunity must be given for subcommittees to report existing school improvement projects and for plans for future improvement.

f. Oral and written reports should:

(1) Be accurate and complete.

(2) Reflect concensus of the entire committee, and, if desirable, highlight areas of disagreement.

(3) Reflect relationships between Philosophy/Objectives and other areas under study.

(4) Provide a complete description of the area under study.

(5) Articulate the most important strengths and concerns of the area under study.

(6) Develop short- and long-term plans for the solution of problems and the improvement of areas identified.

3. WHAT: Preparing for On-Site Visit
   WHO: Building Coordinator, Steering Committee, Principal, Out-of-District Chairperson.
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Select date for team visit.

a. The principal, cooperating with the Out-of-District Chairperson, the Building Coordinator, the Steering Committee, and the Alaska State Chairman, shall determine visitation dates at least eight weeks in advance of the actual visit.

b. The visit will be conducted according to the Alaska Guidelines for Validation Visitation Chairman and Committee Members. A copy of the guide should be sent to the Out-of-District Chairperson immediately after selection.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Selection and size of Visiting Team.

a. The Steering Committee, cooperating with the Building Coordinator, the Principal and the Out-of-District Chairperson should determine the size and select the Visiting Team members. Staff should have the opportunity to suggest names for membership on the Visiting Team. Upon request, the State Committee will provide a list of suggested team members.

b. The size of the team will vary, depending on school enrollment, program of offerings, and the experience of team members. It is recommended that the minimum size team be five persons.

c. Team members shall be selected for their strengths in the varying fields. Committee assignments should be made in accordance with the professional background of each member.

d. Most committees of the Visiting Team will be composed of two to three members. Recognizing the possibility of last minute absentees, and to ensure a full complement, these options may be considered:

   (1) Provide return postcard to determine acceptance or rejection of invitation within ten days.

   (2) Reassign, if necessary, members of other committees to substitute for vacancies.

(3) Have back-up educators identified who may be available to serve on short notice.

RESPONSIBILITY 3:

Send letters of invitation to selected team members.

a. Six to eight weeks prior to the visitation date, send letter of invitation to team members. One member of each committee should be invited to serve as committee chairperson.

b. Letters should specify:

(1) Visiting committee assignment.

(2) Dates of visiting committee validations and travel arrangements. Who will arrange itinerary and how will payment be made?

(3) Expenses will be paid by the school.

(4) Times and location of first meeting and approximate time evaluation will conclude.

(5) Name(s) and addresses of other team members.

(6) Return postcard for indicating acceptance/rejection of invitation.

(7) An indication that evaluation materials will be sent closer to the date of visitation.

(8) What sort of overnight accommodations are available.

(9) Personal clothing needed for the expected weather.

(10) Arrangements that will be made for eating.

(11) Any additional information that would be helpful, particularly if commercial accommodations are either not available or not suitable. (Note: Commercial housing should be the rule whenever available.)

(12) The visiting team members are guests of the school and should be provided courteous, professional treatment.

RESPONSIBILITY 4:

After completion of final report, the Steering Committee, Building Coordinator, and Principal should:

a. Mail to each Visiting Committee member:

   (1) A copy of the School/Community and Philosophy/Objectives reports.

   (2) A copy of the appropriate sections of the report and summary of the self-study.

   (3) A copy of the Alaska Guidelines for Validation Visitation Chairman and Committee Members.

   (4) A copy of the Committee assignments.

b. Mail a completed "School's Report" to the Out-of-District Chairperson.

c. Prepare a schedule of activities for the visitation.

d. For validation team members, prepare packets to use at the school which include:

   (1) Student handbook.

   (2) Course of study (curriculum guide).

   (3) Map of school and morning and afternoon meeting locations.

   (4) Copy of committee assignments.

   (5) Bell schedule, and each teacher's instruction schedule. (Advance planning should assure that all current offerings will be taught sometime during the days of the visitation.)

   (6) Name tags.

   (7) Teachers should plan to make lesson plans and copies of classroom texts and materials available to team members upon request.

e. Send reminder letter two weeks in advance of the visitation. Include a directional map to the school (when appropriate).

f. Provide student guides to assist in room locations (when appropriate).

g. Organize morning arrival, snack and staff meetings.

h. Schedule luncheon opportunity.

i. Allow for evenings to be free of meetings and other obligations. Evenings are usually needed for the team to meet, discuss, and draft the final report.

4. WHAT: Written School's Report
   WHO: Building Coordinator, Steering Committee
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

The final report is the document that summarizes the self-study. Summaries of all subcommittee reports, including recommendations for school improvement, are included. Usually put together by section in a loose-leaf form, this final report becomes the document which directs the focus of the visiting team and the follow-up procedures.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Receive subcommittee reports and write School's Report.

a. After acceptance by faculty, final self-study reports for each subcommittee shall be submitted to the Steering Committee.

b. It is the responsibility of each subcommittee chairperson to ensure that the report is in accordance with the self-study materials and represents an accurate picture of findings and recommendations.

c. The Steering Committee compiles all subcommittee reports, including the School/Community and the Philosophy/Objectives reports, and prepares the final report.

d. The final report constitutes the major findings of the self-study. Differences of opinion should remain; however, major conflicts should be resolved.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

a. The final report should be made available to all faculty for review and editing, if needed. A faculty meeting should be held to resolve major conflicts, if any still remain.

b. Appropriate sections should be mailed to visiting team members two to three weeks prior to the visit. A full copy should be mailed to the Out-of-District Chairperson.

N. ON-SITE VISIT

1. WHAT: Visiting Team Meets Staff and School
   WHO: Visiting Team, Building Staff, Community, Student and Board Representatives, Superintendent
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

The introduction and organizational meeting of the visiting validation team sets the tone for the visit. The Building Principal, Building Coordinator, and Out-of-District Chairperson are primarily responsible for familiarizing the team as to their responsibilities and behavior. It is essential that committees have the opportunity to become acquainted and to discuss the subcommittee's self-study and findings.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

General meeting and introduction.

a. Space should be made available for the organizational meeting of the validation team. This is usually a morning meeting, and coffee, tea, etc., are appropriate.

b. At the organizational meeting, welcome should be given by the superintendent, principal, and possibly the student president or a member of the Board of Education. The Building Coordinator may wish to present an overview of the School/Community and Philosophy/Objectives committee reports.

c. The Steering Committee should make adequate working space, which affords privacy, available for the Visiting Team.

   (1) Supplemental materials that should be available include: school floor plan; daily schedule with teachers' names; room numbers, and learning area instruction times indicated for each teacher; samples of course outlines and curriculum guides; faculty and student handbooks; samples of student publications.

   (2) Arrangements should be made to have available an adequate supply of pencils and paper and, during the last half of the visit, typing services and typewriters.

d. Time should be provided for the Out-of-District Chairperson to meet privately with the team to:

(1) Verify presence of team members.

(2) Assure committees have met together with the committee chairperson.

(3) Review the purpose and appropriate procedures to be used during the visit.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

Team specialists and staff self-study subcommittees meet together to:

a. Review the self-study report of the general and specialty area subcommittees.

b. Identify issues that the self-study subcommittee feels require special review.

c. Review the findings of strength, concerns, and school improvement recommendations.

d. Formulate a plan that includes:

(1) Schedule of classroom visits.

(2) Meeting with interested students.

(3) Informal meeting with teachers of that specialty area.

2. WHAT: Observation-Participation by Visiting Team
   WHO: Visiting Team, Building Staff, Community and Student Representatives
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

The purpose of the Visiting Team is to validate the findings of the building's self-study. Such verification is required if the self-study is part of the accreditation procedures. Equally important, the validation is most valuable to assist the school to interpret its work to the board and community. During the team's visit, the school should be made to feel as comfortable as is possible and should be viewed as expert consultants rather than as critics of the school.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Visit and observe special areas.

a. The responsibilities of the Visiting Team committees are:

   (1) To obtain a comprehensive view of each specialty area through observation and inquiry.

   (2) To encourage free discussion by giving full opportunity for staff to discuss what is occurring within that area.

   (3) To avoid making criticisms or suggestion to or about individual staff members.

b. Visit each specialty area throughout the day. Team members focus on:

   (1) Instruction techniques used.

   (2) Nature and quality of the learning activities.

   (3) Extent of student involvement in the learning activities.

   (4) Interaction between teachers and students.

   (5) Types, variety, and quality of instructional materials.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

Team members meet with teachers and community and student representatives.

a. Conferences with teachers may be held during planning periods, lunch time, before and after school.

b. Meetings with teachers are designed to:

   (1) Explore a given program in greater depth.

   (2) Raise questions and clarify points.

   (3) Seek staff perceptions of their areas and the general school program.

c. Student conferences may be requested, but should not interrupt learning activities.

d. Meetings with community representatives may be arranged on an individual or group basis during the day or in the evening.

RESPONSIBILITY 3:

Visiting Team committees meet to prepare written report of their observations and to make group recommendations.

a. The conclusions of the Visiting Team are made to the school in the form of a written, narrative report edited by the Chairperson. The "School's Report" will include a section for each of the general areas and for each of the specific learning areas.

b. In order to provide a thorough, consistent, cohesive report, each subcommittee shall use the same format. The Alaska "School Report" format will include three separate subsections for each general area and each learning area.

   (1) First is the "Overview" section which provides an introduction and overview of that area of the school's program. It should include a summary of the current situation, a summary of the offerings in each learning area, and a brief assessment of the overall quality of the general learning area. It need not be long, but it should leave no doubt as to the degree to which the committee feels this area of the school's program is functioning effectively.

   (2) The "Commendations" section identifies those strengths which hold firm promise for future growth and upon which the department, staff, and school can build in their efforts toward continued improvement. Make commendations where situations warrant approval and/or praise.

   (3) The "Recommendations" section contains suggestions for correcting weaknesses and for generally enhancing the school's program. Recommendations should only be written on

substantive issues and justified by citing an authority whenever possible, e.g., (1) Northwest Standards, (2) State Requirements, (3) District Guidelines, (4) School's Objectives, (5) recent research findings, (6) accepted practices.

c. All findings in committee reports must have committee member concurrence, not be findings of an individual member.

d. All checklists and evaluations must be thoroughly completed.

3. WHAT: Visiting Team School Report
   WHO: Visiting Team, Building Staff, Superintendent, Community, Board, and Student Representatives
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

The Visiting Team School Report is divided into two phases: oral committee reports to the building self-study committees and a final written report by the Out-of District Chairperson to the Building Principal. These reports must be concise and focus on the group's findings.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Team committees have discussions with building self-study committees.

a. Team committees may meet with specialty area faculty to report on findings.

b. The School Report must speak to specific findings, avoid criticism, and provide opportunity for examination by the building faculty.

c. Recommendations must speak to concerns and be documentable in terms of research and prevailing practice.

d. A professional regard for one another must be maintained.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

The Out-of District Chairperson prepares final written report.

a. The final report is more detailed than the oral report.

b. Final written School Report includes:

   (1) An introduction.

   (2) Commendations and recommendations for school improvement as suggested and approved by the Visiting Team.

   (3) Team committee reports.

   (4) Concluding statement which includes possible follow-up procedures.

c. The Out-of District Chairperson assumes responsibility for the quality of the written report. Care must be taken to maintain consistency within the report.

(1) Commendations should be indicated when practices observed have an advantageous effect on student learning.

(2) Commendations should not be in conflict with needs indicated within the report (internal consistency).

(3) Recommendations should be stated specifically and should indicate the positive effect they will have on student learning.

d. A copy of the final School Report is to be delivered to the principal prior to the Out-of-District Chairperson leaving the school. The principal is responsible for seeing the report is printed and copies mailed to all Validation Team members and the Alaska State Committee.

O. FOLLOW-UP AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

1. WHAT: Receive, Distribute, and Respond to Written Team Report and Develop a School Improvement Plan
   WHO: Principal, Staff, Steering Committee
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

The ultimate goal of the self-study is school improvement: the identification of programs for previously unmet needs, and the improvement of program and service areas that will increase effectiveness and/or efficiency of operation. Action must be taken after the completion of self-study or the value of the expended human and dollar resources is lost. Such action, however, must be approached in a carefully planned and systematic manner.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Receive, distribute, and develop response to the final report of the Out-of-District Chairperson.

The Principal's responsibilities include:

a. Becoming familiar with contents of final report.

b. Either distributing appropriate sections of report to staff subcommittees or summarizing and distributing those essential recommendations and findings to the appropriate faculty groups.

c. Indicating to staff that the report is not prescriptive, but provides an appraisal and recommendations of the educational program and support services offered students.

d. Requesting that each area discuss the specifics of their report and respond to each recommendation in terms of its practicality and desirability.

e. Meet with the Steering Committee to reinforce and/or modify the follow-up procedures as designed in the preliminary plan developed at the workshop.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

Each staff grouping responds to specialty area report.

a. Each group of staff should review the visiting team's findings and recommendations for school improvement.

b. Concensus on those improvements to be implemented should be obtained.

c. Inaccuracies in report should be noted.

d. Staff should prioritize those practical and desirable recommendations which should be implemented.

e. Priority listing along with suggested means and needed resources should be provided to the Steering Committee.

RESPONSIBILITY 3

Steering Committee and Building Principal develop a building response to the final report.

a. The building response document contains at least three major sections:

   (1) Responses to those comments contained in the final report which the staff feel are inaccurate. Such responses should contain support (documentation, if possible) for claim of inaccuracy. Such responses should be attached as an addendum to the final report.

   (2) A response to those school improvement recommendations in terms of which are acceptable, not acceptable; those which are practical and desirable and should be implemented, and those not workable and which shouldn't be implemented.

   (3) A suggested shortand long-range plan for implementing those school improvement recommendations deemed practical and desirable.

   (4) A copy of the building response document should be forwarded to the Out-of-District Chairperson and the Alaska State Committee.

b. The short-and long-range plan should consider the following factors to determine priorities:

   (1) The significance of the plan for school improvement in relation to the major objectives of the school.

   (2) The general attitude of the staff, special competencies of individuals, and their enthusiasm for various aspects of the program.

   (3) Urgency from the viewpoint of administrators, school board, staff, and parents, as well as urgency created by state and national programs.

(4) Community needs and community understanding of the school program.

(5) Availability of resources.

(6) A practical balance of short- and long-range plans.

2. WHAT: Building Principal Report Findings and School Plan for Improvement
   WHO: Principal, Steering Committee, Superintendent
   WHEN: _____

EXPLANATION

The findings of the final report and the building's response and plans for school improvement need to be publicized to the board and community. Reporting procedures should be determined with the district superintendent and central office personnel.

RESPONSIBILITY 1:

Principal reports results of self-study, final report, and school responses and plans for improvement.

Report to the central office and board of directors should include:

a. Areas of strength of school program and support services.

b. Areas needing improvement.

c. Identification of school improvements to be made on a priority basis.

d. Suggested schedule of planned steps to strengthen school program and support services offered students.

RESPONSIBILITY 2:

The Principal and the Steering Committee identify building follow-up procedures.

a. Principal and Steering Committee should identify inservice and research needs.

b. Responsibility should be assigned for implementation responsibilities and timelines established.

c. Periodic reports made to the staff, board, community, and State Committee on the progress of identified school improvement needs.

Appendix A

AVAILABLE MATERIALS

A. Alaska Committee Northwest Association:

1. Accreditation Guidelines for Alaska's Schools

2. Alaska Guidelines for Validation Visitation Chairman and Committee Members

3. Copies of this Manual

Source: Alaska Northwest Association
2440 East Tudor Road
Suite 123
Anchorage, Alaska 99507
Phone: 562-4818

B. Schools Commission Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges:

1. Policies and Standards for Accreditation of:
High Schools
Junior High/Middle Schools
Elementary Schools
K-12 Schools
Special Purpose Schools

2. Accreditation Recognized Quality Education (pamphlet)

3. School Evaluation Improves Your School (pamphlet)

4. Accreditation of Junior High/Middle Schools (pamphlet)

Source: Commission on Schools
Western Oregon State College
Monmouth, Oregon 97361
Phone: (801) 533-6040

C. National Study of School Evaluation:

1. Evaluative Criteria, Sixth Edition (High Schools)

2. Audio-Filmstrip for the Evaluative Criteria: Narrative Edition

3. Secondary School Evaluative Criteria: Narrative Criteria

4. Middle School/Junior High School Evaluative Criteria

5. Audio-Filmstrip for the Middle School/Junior High School Evaluative Criteria, Second Edition

6. Elementary School Evaluative Criteria, Second Edition

7. Audio-Filmstrip for the Elementary School Evaluative Criteria, Second Edition

8. K-12 School Evaluative Criteria

9. Central Office Evaluative Criteria

10. Audio-Filmstrip for Training Evaluators

11. Student Opinion Inventory

12. Teacher Opinion Inventory

13. Parent Opinion Inventory

14. Evaluation Guidelines for Multicultural/Multiracial Education

Source: National Study of School Evaluation
5201 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22041
Phone: (703) 820-2727

0448d